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KENNEDY PLOT SOLVED, AIR-TIGHT CASE AIM--DA

Tells Newsmen Arrests Months Away

District Attorney Jim Garrison said Friday his office solved the Kennedy assassination plot "weeks ago" but is now working to get air-tight cases against the individuals involved. Garrison said, however, arrests "are months away."

Earlier, Garrison said the arrests may be "30 years away."

However, he later explained that he had been tired and had "snapped" at questioning newsmen, not actually being serious about the "30 years" statement.

In a fast-moving chain of events, these were the developments:

—A group of 50 New Orleans citizens, spearheaded by Willard E. Robertson, Joseph M. Rault Jr. and Cecil H. Shilstone met at the Petroleum Club and pledged $100 each a month at least for three months to finance Garrison's continuing investigation. This would allow him to investigate the plot without accounting publicly for the funds. As Rault put it, the investigation would be "unhampered" and "unbiased."

—The Orleans Parish coroner, Dr. Nicholas Chetta, said the death of David W. Ferrie was apparently from natural causes, according to toxological tests.

—Working press members of the Board of Directors of the New Orleans Press Club condemned what it termed Garrison's recent "irresponsible actions" in excluding representatives of the news departments of The Times-Picayune and New Orleans States-Item from a press conference Monday.

WORLDWIDE FUROR

Garrison conducted two impromptu press conferences in the lobby of the Shell Oil Co. bldg. The first created a worldwide furor, apparently, when a wire service quoted Garrison

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SENT BUREAU

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'Through the Looking Glass'

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as saying he had solved the plot and arrests were imminent.

Garrison excused himself from the initial conference, escorted by Rault. They went to the Petroleum Club on the third floor, where the new group, which calls itself "Truth and Consequences," was waiting. Reporters could not hear his words to the group, but they heard Rault ask them if they wished to remain anonymous. They agreed they did.

Reporters, however, recognized Robertson, Shilstone, Police Supt. Joseph I. Giarrusso, engineer David deLaureal, real estate executive Harold Cook, Attorney Eberhard Deutsch, and New Orleans Aviation Board member John Minahat.

On emerging from the luncheon, Garrison was confronted with the wire service story that he had solved the plot. "Why we did this weeks ago," was Garrison's reply. "We're working out details of evidence which probably will take months.

"We know that we are going to be able to arrest every person involved—at least every person who is still living. I'm sure that there will be convictions."

POSES RIDDLE

The district attorney, who said he had had few hours of sleep recently, posed a riddle for newsmen. He said:

"The key to the whole case is through the looking glass. Black is white; white is black."

Garrison added, "I don't want to be cryptic, but that's the way it is."

Garrison turned down the corridor of the club and came face to face with a network television reporter. "Jim, did you say this?" he asked Garrison, holding the wire service copy. "You've got to put the record straight."

"I just want to get some sleep," said Garrison. "I don't care how the world thinks."

Reluctantly, Garrison consented to his second press conference in the lobby of the building. Secretaries arriving back at work from lunch and a thundering horde of newsmen, awaited him.

For one brief moment, it looked as if the Garrison group wouldn't get to the lobby, because the elevator appeared to be stuck on the second floor. But it worked itself free.

As Garrison stepped out of the elevator, he was ringed with newsmen, secretaries and businessmen.

'BEYOND . . . DOUBT'

Garrison began by saying, "My staff and I solved the case weeks ago. I wouldn't say

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this if we didn't have evidence beyond the shadow of a doubt. We know the key individuals, cities involved and how it was done.

According to Garrison, there were "several plots." He said there was a change, "but that's more than I wanted to say."

Garrison suggested there may be suicides among those actually involved in the plot and those who knew of it but kept quiet. "The only way they are going to get away from us," he said, "is to kill themselves."

As reporters crowded closer Garrison was asked what he had to say about the Warren Commission's chief investigator's charge that he was "conducting a performance." Garrison replied, "The chief investigator has conducted a performance that will be remembered in history."

Garrison said his office had jurisdiction over the case.

'FINANCED BY LOAN'

The tall district attorney further revealed that he would be glad to accept funds from private sources to continue the investigation. "In fact," said Garrison, "our investigation has been financed by a $2,500 loan from a bank since about 48 hours after the story was revealed in the newspapers."

A reported quipped, "Are you expecting a contribution from the Central Intelligence Agency?" This referred to recent disclosures that the CIA has contributed substantially to organizations such as the National Student Association.

"No," laughed Garrison, "but I'm expecting some from the FBI."

Garrison, for the first time, admitted that he had accepted some aid from Life Magazine in developing his case. "But our office initiated the investigation," said Garrison. He added other news media have also helped.

"You have my word of honor and promise," continued Garrison to newsmen, "I will give you the story when we make arrests. But it may be months away. We want to get jury verdicts and we are confident we will."

"What's Hale Boggs doing in town?" a businessman asked of Garrison. Boggs was a member of the Warren Commission.

"I have no fight with Hale Boggs," said Garrison.

BRIEF SESSION

Rault, Robertson and Shilstone, on a day of weird press conferences, held forth in a brief session following the meeting at Gravier and S. Rampart as workmen rushed to complete Rault's new office building in the background.

Rault said he, Robertson and Shilstone "are happy to express confidence in our district attorney and state that we have full confidence in his ability, his integrity and the integrity of his office. We and our business friends want to express our support of him and his office in any way we can.

"In order to assist him to complete his investigation in a proper manner, we have agreed to make private funds available in the investigation."

Rault added, "this group is non-partisan, non-political and non-sectarian. It is open to every member of the community regardless of race or religion."

Robertson interjected that a Negro waiter at the Petroleum Club contributed $10 to the fund at the luncheon.

According to Rault, the idea began among the three—Rault, Robertson and Shilstone—over breakfast Thursday. They called businessmen to join the group and meet at lunch.

NO INDICATION

Rault said the money would be set up in a separate account "in a local bank" and Shilstone said, "It will be spent at the

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Explaining Money Support for DA's Probe

—Photo by The Times-Picayune.

THE THREE LEADERS of a new businessmen's group giving financial support to District Attorney Jim Garrison's probe into the Kennedy assassination are shown at an outdoor Friday afternoon press conference. They are (from left) Willard E. Robertson, Cecil M. Shilstone and Joseph M. Rault Jr.

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discretion of the district attorney."

Asked about whether they would keep in contact with Garrison and see how the investigation is going, Rault said, "We'll work this out later."

Shilstone was precise in one reply to a reporter's question whether the vouchers or expense accounts would be available to the press because public investigators would be used. "None of your business," said Shilstone.

Reporting the chemical analysis of the body of Ferrie, a central figure in Garrison's investigation, Dr. Chetta said, "There is no indication whatsoever of suicide or murder." He added a ruptured artery in the brain was the cause of death.

A chemical analysis of Ferrie's blood, urine and skin was negative for the presence of alcohol, drugs and poison, said Dr. Chetta.

Chetta said he had been contacted by a physician who had treated Ferrie. "This doctor told me he had treated Ferrie for high blood pressure and recently for a gastro-intestinal disturbance," said Dr. Chetta. "The doctor said he found Ferrie unduly disturbed and depressed and said Ferrie spoke about suicide.

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Spanish-speaking persons dressed in green guerrilla uniforms and helmets. He said two of them came to his home—at that time in New Orleans—and on the second occasion he met the third at Ferrie's home.

NOT TAKEN SERIOUSLY

Russo said he did not take any of Ferrie's statements seriously until he saw Ferrie's photograph in the newspaper this week.

The salesman said he was a political science student at Loyola at the time. He said he met Ferrie through a friend who was a member of the Civil Air Patrol. Ferrie was a pilot.

The friend told Russo that he was training with Ferrie in jungle warfare "to help bring about more democratic government," Russo said. The friend's family had contacted him in an effort to break "Ferrie's hold on their son," Russo said.

Russo said the reason for discussing presidential assassinations was his interest in politics.

The following is the complete text of the statement made by the working press members of the board of directors of the New Orleans Press Club:

"We emphatically condemn the recent irresponsible actions of New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison for excluding representatives of the news departments of the New Orleans The Times-Picayune and States-Item newspapers from a press conference related to a worldwide news event of local origin.

"We lament such arbitrary action on the part of an elected official of this community and urge all members of the working press here to vehemently protest such tactics."

CITIES, INDIVIDUALS

During Garrison's second impromptu press conference in the Shell Oil Company bldg., the district attorney made the following additional comments, given in part here, in narrative form:

"We know what cities were involved, we know how it was done, in the essential respects; we know the key individuals involved, and we are in the process of developing evidence now. I thought I made that clear days ago.

"On the other hand though, that does not mean any arrests are imminent. There are some individuals that I would like to arrest now, some that I know . . . will be around to arrest later. I have to take the risk that they will stay around because you can develop a better case if you prolong arrests until you can have the whole group of key individuals.

"Now I may have contributed to some misunderstanding about imminence because I am so darn tired I guess I snap at some reporters who keep questioning me, and they said 'will arrests be imminent?' and I said no, they'll be maybe in the next 30 years.

SIDESTEPS QUESTION

"Sorry, it won't take that long but they're not that imminent because we're now building a case, and I might add, it's a case we will not lose. And anybody that wants to bet against us is invited to, but they will be disappointed."

Asked if he belives that Oswald did not shoot President Kennedy, Garrison replied: "I don't want to get involved in speculations as to individuals, but I will say that there's no question about the fact that there was a plot and there were a number of individuals involved, and we will make arrests based on that and we will make charges based on that and we will obtain convictions based on that."

Asked again if Oswald was involved, the district attorney answered, "I can't answer that."

Questioned about the initiation of the plot, Garrison said there "were several plots, and a change of course did occur. Now, that's more than I wanted to say."

Replying to a question as to whether Ferrie's death will hamper the investigation, Garrison stated, "No, no, it created a problem as to time because I think Mr. Ferrie possibly would have . . . told us in time, but I'm not going to pretend that it entered the case.

OTHER SUICIDES

"You know I could say, well, we had a great case but it ended here, but I'm not going to say that. We're building a case

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PLANNED TO SUE

"The doctor also said that Ferrie was determined to sue District Attorney Garrison for a large sum of money. I believe the figure was something like $500,000."

Meanwhile, a Baton Rouge insurance salesman, who said he knew Ferrie while he (the salesman) was a student here at Loyola University, said Ferrie told him about a month before President John F. Kennedy's death "we will get him and it won't be long."

Perry Raymond Russo, 25, said he had known Ferrie about 18 months when the statement was made. He said he had written Garrison about his contacts with Ferrie in the summer and early fall of 1963.

Once Ferrie told him that "you know we can get Kennedy if we want him," Russo said.

The assassination of a president was discussed several times with Ferrie before the statements, Russo said.

"It was just general conversation," said Russo.

According to Russo, he twice saw Ferrie in the company of

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CASE SOLVED, SAYS GARRISON

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that is not going to be ended by the death of anyone."

Asked if he feels there is a possibility that other principals in the investigation may be killed or may commit suicide, he replied, "I think that there will probably be other suicides, yes."

Reminded that Gov. John Connally of Texas said earlier Friday that it would not be in the national interest to reopen the investigation unless something definite was present, the district attorney answered, recalling a recent occurrence of water pollution, that it was decided in that case "not to let the people know the the water was polluted because it might be bad for them to know.

"Well I happen to feel that truth can stand any kind of exposure. I said this before, and I don't want to run it in the ground, but I happen to feel that the order applies here to let justice be done though the heavens fall. And I'm not interested in what somebody thinks would be good for the country if we put the lid on it. Perhaps it would make things nicer and everything would be more placid if nobody dug into the truth anymore. I'm going to ask them the truth, and let the chips fall where they may."

SEES AID FOR OSWALD

In Dallas Friday, District Attorney Henry Wade said he had believed all along that "someone might have encouraged or aided Lee Harvey Oswald" in killing Kennedy.

Wade said he explained this to the Warren Commission but added that he has "absolutely no evidence" to refute the commission's finding that Oswald acted alone.

"It seemed a little complicated for Oswald to figure out alone, and he did have a lot of Castro literature on him," said Wade. "He had to plan this pretty well, learn the route and learn to be in one certain place."

Wade said he has had no recent talks with Garrison, and has been getting his information on the probe from newspapers.

Locally, Garrison is known to have considered a theory that a group of anti-Castroites had been plotting to assassinate Cuban Prime Minister Fidel Castro. The group then later changed its target to President Kennedy.

When Garrison said there had been "several plots," it was believed that this plan was one he had in mind.

One aspect of the theory was that Oswald was to have been the gunman in the Castro plot, which supposedly collapsed when he failed to enter Cuba.

When the accused Presidential assassin was denied entry to Cuba, the target was switched to Kennedy, according to the theory.

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